

The *Public i*, a project of the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center, is an independent, collectively-run, community-oriented publication that provides a forum for topics underreported and voices underrepresented in the dominant media. All contributors to the paper are volunteers. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to submit articles or story ideas to the editorial collective. We prefer, but do not necessarily restrict ourselves to, articles on issues of local impact written by authors with local ties.

*The opinions are those of the authors and do not reflect the views of the IMC as a whole.*

**EDITORS/FACILITATORS:**

- Antonia Darder
- Brian Dolinar
- davep
- Shara Esbenschade
- Belden Fields
- Bob Illyes
- Paul Mueth
- Marcia Zumbahlen

**THE PUBLIC I**

Urbana-Champaign IMC  
 202 South Broadway  
 Urbana, IL, 61801  
 217-344-8820  
 www.ucimc.org



**Get Involved with the *Public i***

You don't need a degree in journalism to be a citizen journalist. We are all experts in something, and we have the ability to share our information and knowledge with others. The *Public i* is always looking for writers and story ideas. We invite you to submit ideas or proposals during our weekly meetings (Thursdays at 5:30pm at the UCIMC), or to contact one of the editors.

**Support UC-IMC when you shop at Jerry's IGA**

When you shop at an IGA, request a charitable enrollment form from a cashier or manager, and designate the UC-IMC (#055187) as your preferred charity. A percentage of your purchase will then go to the UC-IMC.

**DISMANTLE  
 ) CHANGE  
 ) BUILD**

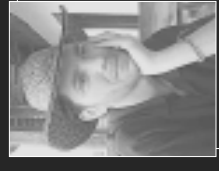
STRATEGY AND STRUGGLE TO ABOLISH THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX: TEN YEARS AND COUNTING

**CRIO**



FOR MORE INFORMATION, TO MAKE A DONATION, AND TO GET INVOLVED, CONTACT US.

mail: Critical Resistance/CRIO  
 1804 Franklin Street, Suite 504, Oakland, CA 94612  
 phone: 510.444.0164  
 email: cr@criticalresistance.org  
 web: www.criticalresistance.org



Patrick Thompson Exonerated  
 Brian Dolinar  
 Page 1



"Nor Any Drop to Drink"  
 Anne Phillips  
 Page 2



Aramark™ Makes Horrible Lunches  
 dezyp  
 Page 5



Community Garden in N° Champaign  
 Niloofar Shambayati  
 Page 5

**SUSTAINING CONTRIBUTORS**

The *Public i* wishes to express its deep appreciation to the following sustaining contributors for their financial and material support:

- SocialistForum: An Open Discussion and Action Group, Meets 3rd Saturdays of the month, 3-5 pm, at IMC, Broadway & Elm. (U)**
- World Harvest International and Gourmet Foods**  
 519 E. University, Champaign
- Union of Professional Employees (UPE)**
- The Natural Gourmet**  
 2225 S. Neil, Champaign; 355-6365
- Progressive Asset Management, Financial West Group**  
 Socially Responsible Investing
- Jerusalem Cafe**  
 601 S. Wright St, Champaign; 398-9022
- The AFL-CIO of Champaign County**
- That's Rentertainment**  
 516 E. John, Champaign; 384-0977
- National Fish Therapeutic Massage**  
 113 N. Race, Urbana, 239-3400
- AWARE, the Anti-War, Anti-Racism Effort**  
 Meetings every Sunday at 5pm at the IMC
- Tribal Life, Inc.**  
 217-766-6531, <http://triballife.net/>
- Milo's Restaurant**  
 1560 Lincoln Square, Urbana; 344-8946

If you or your organization would like to become a sustaining contributor to the *Public i*, or would like more information, please call 344-7265, or email [imc-print@ucimc.org](mailto:imc-print@ucimc.org).



# Patrick Thompson Exonerated

By Brian Dolinar



Stories of those being exonerated are becoming increasingly common, with wrongly convicted men and women being released from prisons in the United States at a rate of approximately one each month. Many of these exonerations have come after the DNA testing has proven an individual's innocence. When Patrick Thompson was set free on May 16, 2008, it was not by any scientific evidence—indeed, there was no evidence in this case—it was by sheer people power.

To understand this case, it is important to go back to 2004 and the copwatch videotaping Thompson was doing with his colleague Martel Miller. That Spring they founded VEYA (Visionaries Educating Youth and Adults) and sent a letter to Champaign police notifying them of their plan to tape routine traffic stops with the intention of exposing racial profiling and overpolicing of the black community.

Indeed, Thompson and Miller's video *Citizen's Watch* caught local police in many embarrassing moments. Among other things was footage of Assistant State's Attorney Elizabeth Dobson videotaping Thompson and Miller while they were videotaping police. Dobson was riding around with Champaign police collecting evidence to prosecute the two black activists.

On Monday, August 23, 2004, Miller was indicted on two counts of felony eavesdropping, an outdated state law that carried four to 15 years in prison. On August 24, 2004, the very next day, Thompson was charged with sexual abuse and home invasion. A white woman who lived next to Thompson alleged that he entered her apartment at approximately 7 a.m. in the morning and attempted to rape her.

The same Assistant State's Attorney Elizabeth Dobson who was directly involved in stopping Thompson and Miller from videotaping (and is currently named in a civil lawsuit), was the same person who convinced a grand jury that Thompson should be indicted for sexual abuse and home invasion.

After significant public outcry, State's Attorney John Piland dropped the eavesdropping charges against Miller, but not against Thompson who remained in jail on an exorbitant \$250,000 bond. Challenger for State's Attorney's office, Julia Rietz, ran her campaign using the eavesdropping case as an example of Piland's overcharging. She spoke at the First Annual Unity March in West Side Park organized by CU Citizens for Peace and Justice. Her election was won with the help of Miller and others in the community outraged over the eavesdropping case.

In November 2004, John Piland was voted out of office and Dobson went with him. When Rietz stepped in, she dropped the eavesdropping charges against Thompson, reduced his bond, and after spending four months in the Champaign County jail Thompson was released. While this decision was made by the newly-elected State's Attorney, it was the result of people coming together for police accountability and reform of the criminal justice system.

Claiming she had given Thompson legal advice in the

past, Rietz said she had a conflict of interest and withdrew herself, effectively washing her hands of the Thompson case and disassociating herself from the people who had helped put her into office. The home invasion and sexual abuse case was then given to a Special Prosecutor from Springfield, Michael Vujovich, who has a reputation for overzealous prosecution.

Although Thompson had no formal legal training, he made the bold decision to defend himself in the first trial, which ended in a hung jury. In the second trial, Thompson hired local African American attorney Harvey Welch, who called only one witness for the defense, and the trial resulted in a guilty verdict. At this point, attorneys Bob Kirchner and Ruth Wyman stepped in, filed a post-trial motion, and called several additional witnesses. In a rare court decision, Judge Harry Clem reversed the guilty verdict on the basis that Thompson had received ineffective assistance of counsel from Welch.

### THIRD TRIAL

This brings us to the third trial, which began Monday, May 12, 2008. The trial started with the selection of an all-white jury. Urbana officer Michael Hediger testified that he responded to the 911 call the morning of August 24, 2004. He interviewed the accuser and went to the Sunnycrest Apartments that afternoon to arrest Thompson. Hediger admitted he did not conduct any further investigation to take fingerprints, photograph the crime scene, collect hairs, conduct interviews, or check the accuser for scratches and bruises. It is protocol for police to conduct a full investigation in a serious crime such as this one. Whether Hediger did not investigate because this alleged crime occurred in a poor neighborhood, or because he was part of a plot to set up Thompson is uncertain. As Thomson's attorney Ruth Wyman later told me, "We'll never know, because who would admit to that?"

The accuser took the stand and again gave her account of how Thompson, shirtless, entered her apartment, grabbed, and attacked her. In police reports, she told officer Hediger that she was yelling and screaming, yet the state failed to produce any neighbors who heard anything that morning. When Vujovich began to inquire about her tone during the alleged incident, she said, "I don't know how to explain it." She then began crying and the jury had to be escorted out of the courtroom.

After questioning by the state, the accuser was cross-examined by Bob Kirchner who asked about several inconsistent statements made in the four times she has testified—July 2005, July 2006, September 2007, and the currently in 2008. Before, she said that Thompson had



Patrick Thompson's supporters celebrate

trapped her in the laundry room. Another time she said she first saw him at the railing in front of his apartment. One time she testified that she had her laundry in a basket. Another time she said she was carrying it in her arms. Was she yelling or not? When asked about these inconsistencies, she repeatedly responded, "I don't remember."

After all the state's witnesses appeared, Vujovich rested his case. Kirchner then motioned for a directed verdict on the two counts, arguing that the state had not proved its case on the charges of home invasion or sexual abuse.

It looked like a long shot. But in a miraculous turn of events, Judge Clem allowed one of Kirchner's motions and dismissed the charge of home invasion. Of all things, he ruled that the state had not proven that Patrick Thompson was not a police officer! This is one of the elements required to prove a charge of home invasion and Vujovich had forgotten to question his witnesses on this point.

Vujovich attempted to argue that he had not closed his case, but an angry Judge Clem said that he would not allow that kind of "gamesmanship."

It was an emotional moment and Thompson broke down crying. At the recess, he rushed to embrace his long-time friend Martel Miller in the courtroom. Even though the sexual abuse charge remained, the weight of the six to 30 year sentence that home invasion carried was lifted off of Thompson's shoulders.

The defense presented its witnesses, which included Patrick and his wife Maria. When asked to state her name for the record, Maria began crying and the jury had to be escorted out of the courtroom. After collecting herself, Maria gave her recollection of the morning of August 24, 2004. She said that from 6:10 a.m. when she woke up, until 7:30 a.m. when her husband left to buy books for his fall semester at Parkland College, he was always in her sight.

Thompson then took the stand, confidently testifying to his work with VEYA in 2004 and his memory of events at the time of the alleged incident. On Sunday, August 22, he was at the Independent Media Center, then a storefront on Main Street in downtown Urbana, filming for a video documentary he was producing. He explained how a microphone stand fell, injuring his right index finger. Monday morning, he and Maria went to Osco to buy a finger splint that he wore to protect it. His accuser never mentioned in any of her accounts that the assailant was wearing a finger splint.

Kirchner asked Thompson directly, "Did you know the accuser and did you ever enter her apartment?" Thompson stated flatly, "No."

Continued on page 3



Patrick and Maria Thompson

## "Nor Any Drop to Drink"

By Anne Phillips



Anne Phillips is an Urbana librarian possessed by Arctic dreams and the knowledge that a river is not a ditch

Nowhere is the "disconnect" of modern American life more apparent than in our relationship with water. We all know that water is necessary for life. We know that water is a precious resource and that our future requires the most careful and vigilant stewardship of our water supply. And yet, walk in the kitchen, turn the faucet, water comes out. It's clean and safe: you can drink it! It's the quintessential American achievement.

We know that water pollution and water shortages exist; they exist here in our country, in our state, and in our county, but somehow this has no sustained impact on our everyday reality. An occasional boil-order notwithstanding, our experience encourages complacency. Illinois water-use laws reflect this myopic view; based on ill-defined "reasonable use" standards, the law offers little support for water conservation or long-term protection of our water supply. Turn the faucet! The water's there waiting.

Would that it were true and true forever! Luckily, Champaign-Urbana is currently in a very fortunate situation, water-wise. Our water comes from the Mahomet Aquifer and it is an abundant and nearly pristine source. The aquifer, a 3700 square mile area of porous water-saturated sand and gravel, held by bedrock on the bottom and sides and topped by nearly watertight clay-rich glacial till, spreads from north of Danville on the Illinois-Indiana border to the southeastern corner of Tazewell County. Formed by the retreat of Ice Age glaciers, it is currently serving up drinking water that fell on earth between three and ten thousand years ago.

An aquifer is a renewable resource. As part of the hydrologic cycle, some water will return to the aquifer and "recharge" it. However, we must think in geological time: rain falling on Champaign County today will travel to the aquifer at the rate of about one inch per year, completing its recharge function in approximately three thousand years. Remember, too, that human development affects this cycle: converting prairie and forest to cropland and cities tends to reduce the amount of water that makes it to the aquifer.

### BEST OF THE BEST

Ours is prize-winning water. Illinois American Water has brought home "Best of the best" honors for two years running from the American Water Works national taste test competition. Recently, concerns have been raised over naturally occurring arsenic in the water, but this is a minor issue, for now, as this level of arsenic is easily dealt with at the water treatment plant. A deep aquifer like the Mahomet is not immune to outside contamination, but it is fairly well protected from it. Pure, pleasant-tasting, and

plentiful – what's to worry?

The drought of 2005 captured people's attention. In January 2006, the governor of Illinois issued an executive order calling for the development of a comprehensive statewide water supply planning and management strategy. The two areas of the state identified as most at risk for water shortages and conflicts were the Northeastern Illinois Deep Aquifer and the Mahomet Aquifer. In 2007, in response to the executive order, a three-year data-gathering program was begun for our aquifer, with the goal of producing a regional water supply plan to include scenarios through 2050.

What puts the Mahomet Aquifer at risk? In the words of Derek Winstanley, chief of the Illinois State Water Survey: "Groundwater is a renewable resource, but not an infinite resource... we are talking about finite limits, for all purposes and for all times." Pumping lowers the water table. Over-pumping is the single greatest threat to the continued viability of the Mahomet Aquifer.

Furthermore, while the growth potential for aquifer use as a whole remains quite large, the Champaign-Urbana area may already be approaching local yield capacity. In addition, continued growth in withdrawals from the same part of the aquifer will eventually result in "dewatering", a serious situation which could dramatically compromise the quality of water in the aquifer. ISWS data gathered so far suggests that we can withdraw an additional 16 or 17 million gallons per day before we begin to dewater the aquifer.

### WILL WE RUN OUT?

Is this enough? Population growth, climate change, continuing urbanization, and the needs of agriculture and manufacturing are among the factors that must be considered when making water use decisions. Springfield, Bloomington-Normal, Decatur and Danville currently rely on surface water sources but are looking at the Mahomet Aquifer as a possible alternative or back-up supply. Climate change studies of Illinois suggest only that the future is uncertain. More frequent or more severe droughts, with a corresponding need for greater irrigation, are definitely one possibility.

Water isn't just necessary for life; it is a major component in manufacturing. ITT (the telecommunications people) recently reported that nearly 40% of their business is now in "fluid technology," supplying pumps and transport systems to deliver water, primarily to factory floors. There are 62,000 gallons in each ton of steel, 39,000 in the manufacture of the average car, 3000 gallons in every single semiconductor.

And, as we all have been learning locally, it takes 3 to 8 gallons of water for every gallon of ethanol, which translates into 1.9 million gallons per day for an ethanol plant such as the one being developed by The Andersons for northwest Champaign. The Andersons are not alone. Ethanol plants are also under development in Royal, Tuscola and throughout the state.

Whether or not biofuels are the answer to our energy problems is a question outside the scope of this article. Regardless, The Andersons plant plans to withdraw 1.9 million gallons per day of pristine aquifer water to use for evaporative cooling. This would not have an immediate effect on the quality of water in the Mahomet Aquifer. But as well-reported by the *News-Gazette*, it most certainly would have an effect on the quality of water in the



The Andersons grain facility

Kaskaskia River, the ultimate discharge site for the water. The fates of our rivers and our groundwater are intertwined: ultimately what affects the one, affects the other.

More important, in a world of "finite limits for all purposes and for all times" is this the use we want for water from the Mahomet Aquifer? The price of gasoline right now gives us a tiny glimpse of what it really means to live in a world of skyrocketing demand and scarce resources. But this is water. You can't opt out of your need for it by walking to work instead. We already know that we need to think ecologically – we need to think in terms of interconnections and we need to think in terms of seventy times seven generations. We need to think "for all purposes and for all times."

But wait! We, the citizens of Central Illinois, don't get to decide. If the Illinois EPA grants The Andersons their pollution permit for wastewater discharge, they may proceed. This ethanol plant, which could, in fact, be located anywhere, will bring perhaps 35 jobs to the county and save transport cost for those local farmers who own their own semis and want to jump on the ethanol bandwagon. That's not much of a return for 1.9 million gallons per day of "best of the best" water.

At the moment, we do not have a water supply plan for the future. Under current "reasonable use" standards, water rights come with property rights, unless challenged in court. The courts listen to the competing claims of current users; the future user has no voice. Perhaps it is time to change their perspective. What the Mahomet Aquifer may really need is a group of outraged citizens and a good lawyer.

## A New Clock Tower Does Not Justice Make

The County Board passed in January a proposal for spending \$6.81 million dollars on courthouse and tower renovations. Renovations have begun on the clock tower, but community concerns persist.

Area residents, such as Chris Evans, still insist that "While we are writing checks for the county clock tower, let's look into what is going on inside the building." Instead, Evans contends that increased funding should be going for the Public Defender's Office, noting that a lack of public defenders violates citizens' constitutional rights to adequate legal representation and due process in Champaign County.

Belden Fields comments that "The Courthouse is not a church—it does not

have to reach up to the heavens," in response to the millions that are being spent for the renovation of the courthouse building and Clock Tower. Instead, Fields believes that some of that money should have been used to set up a contingency fund for the County nursing home.

Although a variety of worthy proposals were presented by area residents to the County Board prior to their decision, it seems that again property—the Courthouse and Clock Tower in this instance—are the priority for community officials, rather than the needs of disenfranchised people in this community, who bare the brunt of government neglect.



The Champaign County Court House clock tower restoration





# Causes and Consequences of Increasing Commodity Prices

By Michael Brun



Michael Brun is an economist residing in Urbana.

Food costs more. Fuel costs more. Metals and other raw materials cost more as well. But this is no traditional inflation. Labor doesn't cost more; wage rates are not rising, at least not in the US, in the rest of the traditional "developed countries," or in many impoverished countries either; and so there is as yet no wage-price spiral. In a typical inflation, higher prices lead to higher wages, which in turn lead to even higher prices; and so on. But up to now, it is just prices rising and wages staying the same. Wage earners are getting poorer in many parts of the world. Why is this happening? Here are some factors commonly mentioned:

1. Increased demand for food, especially in China and India, where wages and profits are increasing. This includes increased demand for basic foodstuffs such as rice, corn, wheat, and soybeans; it also includes increased demand for meat and dairy, as the new middle class there develops taste and purchasing power for items higher on the food chain. Meanwhile, low wage levels there still keep down wages here, so no increases are expected to keep pace with higher commodity prices.

2. Increased demand for fuel and nearly all other raw materials in the same countries. Since these are used as inputs to agriculture, it means that extra cash now coming to farmers from harvest yields will partly or entirely be lost again to higher production costs. How this will balance

out for small peasant operators and for large modern industrial farms is not yet clear. Already clear, on the other hand, is increased use of farm products for fuel. Agricultural ethanol production should push up food prices even further while restraining fuel prices. Higher food prices lead to starvation and misery among the world's two billion poorest people, who depend on food relatively more heavily than on fuel; yet the trade-off makes sense to most people in the United States and other "developed" regions, who are not so close to starvation, and for whom fuel is a relatively more important issue. It appears to make sense to entrepreneurs and policy-makers in China and India as well, though some of their own people may be among those currently suffering.

3. Speculators, having foreseen this, and wanting to get their money out from the collapsing stock market bubble in 2000 and 2001, and then from the collapsing real estate bubble of the past two years, putting their money into commodities and are perhaps now creating a commodity bubble. In other words, prices are rising more and faster than they would without speculator participation, and might eventually come down again part of the way when speculators sell to take their profits or, in the case of those jumping in or out too late, their losses.

4. Money is losing value, partly due to efforts of banking systems and governments to deal with the collapsing real estate bubble. So speculators do not merely want to get out of real estate; they want to get out of money. Prevailing interest rates are now so low that even with the moderate level of inflation expected, the actual rate of return on many investments in the so-called "money mar-

ket" is expected to be negative. That is another reason now to invest in real commodities instead.

5. Increased cooperation among members of OPEC, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, since 1998 giving them more monopoly power in oil and gas. Around the same time, a wave of consolidations in the private sector, creating the hyphenated giants such as Exxon-Mobil and BP-Amoco, has given those corporations more power too. Unlike OPEC, the private firms seem to have little direct influence on the price of crude oil, but they can and do control refining capacity and hence have their finger on the price of gasoline, diesel and other refined products.

6. Increasingly tense competition for control of resources. While for most of us it doesn't matter if we pay \$130 per barrel to a US or British, Russian, Iranian, Nigerian, Mexican or Chinese oil extracting company, it does matter to those people worried about earning that money, and worried too about the "national security" associated with control of access to vital resources. They are in struggle already and prepared to escalate. The costs of that struggle, including for example the Iraq occupation, are part of the resource price story.

In brief, market forces currently favor raw commodities, military and police services, and perhaps innovative entrepreneurship, at the expense of ordinary labor. Perhaps too much inequality in ownership of resources leads to too many people depending solely on labor for their income; and so there is too much labor on the market, and too many people badly making nearly useless things.

## Sentencing of Brian Chesley

By Brian Dolinar

Upon the recommendation of Assistant State's Attorney Rob Scales, Judge John R. Kennedy agreed to a sentence of 100 hours community service for Brian Chesley. Chesley was convicted by an all-white jury of obstructing and resisting a peace officer. On March 30, 2007, he was stopped by Champaign in Frederick Douglass Park after leaving the gymnasium, attacked by three officers, pepper sprayed, and sent to the hospital.

At the hearing Friday morning, May 9, 2008, Chesley's Attorneys Bob Kirchner and Ruth Wyman submitted a post-trial motion to overturn the guilty verdict. Among sever-

al errors cited, they questioned the basis of the stop, claiming that Champaign police officer Andre Davis was not authorized to stop Chesley, and that doing so was "selective enforcement of the law."

Prosecutor Scales said that Davis did have a "reasonable and articulable suspicion" to stop Chesley because the park was closed at dusk. He said that by Defense Attorney Wyman's explanation, officers could not stop anybody. He gave the example that if police saw someone breaking a car window, they could not question that individual whether the car was theirs or not.

Scales also said there was no evidence that Chesley was stopped solely because he was African American. If the judge ruled that it was, it would mean officers could never stop individuals in African American neighborhoods because it could be a result of race.

Of course, Chesley was not breaking any car windows that night, but simply walking his eight year-old friend home after playing basketball. Most likely, he would not have faced this situation if he was a white youth walking in a white neighborhood.

Judge Kennedy, who throughout the

trial proceedings had shot down almost all of the defense's challenges, denied the post-trial motion.

During sentencing, Brian Chesley's mother testified to her son's good character, and Chesley himself gave a statement. He was given 100 hours community service, which has to be completed in ten months, and has to pay court fines.

Attorney Kirchner says he plans to appeal the case.

For a full account of the trial see "Three Cops Versus An Entire Community" at: <http://www.ucimc.org/node/2743>

## Patrick Thompson Exonerated

Continued from page 1

### EVOLVING STORY

In closing arguments, Vujovich said this case depended on whether or not the jury believed the accuser or not. Seeming to direct his remarks at Thompson and his supporters, a rotating pool of dozens who sat through the trial, Vujovich said that we can blame the police, "But don't blame the Urbana Police Department for what happened to [the accuser]."

Kirchner, in closing, highlighted the many inconsistencies in the accuser's testimony. His explanation was that whether because she was late for work or for some other reason, "the excuse offered that morning took on a life of its own." This "evolving story," he said, was not enough to convict Thompson.

After the jury deliberated for approximately one hour, they returned with a verdict of not guilty. Thompson cried tears of joy, hugged his wife and said, "it's over... it's over."

Throughout this four-year ordeal, Patrick Thompson has been the galvanizing force for criminal justice reform in Champaign County. But it has been community mobilization which narrowly saved Patrick from the clutches of the prison industrial complex. Thousands of dollars were raised for his defense, many hours were spent watching trials, and numerous protests were held at the courthouse. This is the story of a man exonerated before he served years in the penitentiary. It was people power that set Patrick free.

For a full report of the trial and interviews after the verdict go to [ucimc.org](http://ucimc.org).

### Criminal (In)Justice Part I: Police Review Board & the Thompson Case

Liberacion!

Sunday morning, July 13  
at 10:00 am,  
on WEFT 90.1

The show includes interviews with Patrick and his supporters after the reading of the not guilty verdict in his third trial, material from a recent courthouse protest, and an interview with Danielle Chynoweth on the Police Review Board in Urbana. Tune in.



# UPTV and the Chief Controversies

By Belden Fields



The glaring similarities between the controversy surrounding the broadcast of the anti-Semitic videos on Urbana Public Television and the characterization of a Native American during athletic events and in the Homecoming Parade at the U of I are that: (1) they have been deeply hurtful to the people portrayed, (2) those people have been the victims of genocide, and (3) they have been enmeshed with and facilitated by public bodies, in the first instance a city and in the second a public university.

I want to elaborate on these three similarities and the issues these raise in regard to the principle of our constitutionally guaranteed right to freedom of expression.

## THE HURT

We know that people have been hurt by these two sets of portrayals because the people so portrayed have told us that. I remember talking with Charlene Teters, the Native American graduate student who many years ago took her kids to see a sporting event only to watch in astonishment as the Chief appeared at half time adorned in sacred symbols and proceeded to dance around in imitation of a Native American dance. While presented as a chief of the Illinois Indians, neither his dress nor his dance had anything to do with that group. But just as importantly, the fact that this caricature was used as entertainment was hurtful to Charlene and to so many Native Americans, both on and off the campus, who have expressed their feelings about it. Similarly, Jewish people have come before the Urbana City Council, and have written letters to the editors of the *News-Gazette*, expressing the pain caused by the portrayal of Jews as, among other horrible and slanderous things, child molesters. Just as Native Americans find it difficult to understand how a public university could sponsor, facilitate, or legitimize such a bogus portrayal of an ethnic group in our society, so too do Jews find it difficult to understand how their city could facilitate such a vicious and hurtful portrayal under the guise of freedom of expression.

## GENOCIDE

All societies, including our own, recognize some limits to freedom of expression. We cannot shout "fire" in a crowded theater, commit perjury, give false statements to a law enforcement officer, infringe copyright, conspire to commit a crime, or libel someone without some legal penalty. Thus our freedoms are general rules. We cannot be free to say or do certain things that might come into our minds without engaging in the contradiction of infringing on the rights of others.

This portrayal in the videos shown on UPTV is the same sort of portrayal that the Nazis used in their propaganda machine to legitimize the campaign of genocide against the Jewish people of Europe. There are those who have said that if people are so deeply hurt by such portray-

als of themselves and their ancestors, they can just leave the game, turn their backs, or turn off the TVs or switch channels. What such individuals fail to realize is that a people that historically has been subjected to genocide cannot just turn it off. Once the images are seen, or once they have the knowledge that others are being presented such images, the hurt is there and it stays there. Moreover, it is not just the hurt caused by remembering the past genocidal killings, but the thought that the killings could



Protest against 'Chief Illiniwek'

happen again in the future and that such negative portrayals could contribute to that.

This is one of the reasons that the 1951 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide includes not just killing of a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group, but also "causing seriously bodily or mental harm to members of the group." A people that has been subjected to genocide continues to live with that reality, that loss, that fear, and sees with good cause such negative stereotypes as a continuation of the process. This Convention, to which the U. S. government is a party, confers a right to groups to not be subjected to genocide, including the dimension of mental harm. In some European countries, there is a greater recognition of this reality which precludes governmental support for such portrayals of racial and ethnic groups, but also translates into criminal penalties for hate speech by individuals. Such is the potency of the history of genocide and the Convention in the jurisprudence of European democracies.

An additional issue regarding genocide is intent. The Convention on genocide specifies "intent" to destroy a group. There is no question that the anti-Semitic videos on UPTV have the intent to cause mental harm to Jewish people. Given their similarity to Nazi propaganda, after which they are obviously modeled, it is also clear that the makers would not mind seeing the same final result that we saw in Europe in the 1940s. The situation regarding the Chief is a

bit more nuanced. I do not think that most of the Chief supporters were initially prejudiced against Native Americans. However, once Native American people made clear that they were harmed by the portrayal, the excuse of the original lack of intent fell away. One does not "honor" a group with a history of genocide by appropriating their imagery and forcing a stereotype that they find hurtful upon them.

## POWER

There is no doubt that Native Americans are one of the most powerless, if not the most powerless, ethnic groups in the United States. Their numbers are small, resources few, health situation deplorable, and outlets for public expression sparse. In sum, they continue to live in the misery traceable to the original acts of genocide. The situation of Jewish people in the United States is different from that of the Native Americans and even from their own situations in the first half of the 20th century, when Jews were excluded from residing in certain areas and had quotas imposed upon them in a number of private universities. One Urbana citizen speaking against censorship of the anti-Semitic videos, pointed out that Jews were politically powerful in American society and emphasized the power of what he characterized as the Jewish lobby in determining U.S. foreign policy regarding Israel.

The problem with this argument is that the Jewish genocide of the 1940s began in Germany where Jews were very well represented in the economic, political, and cultural life of that society. One of the major arguments that the Nazis used against them was that they "controlled" everything, they were everywhere, an insidious foreign presence that was driving German as well as international politics and economics and degrading German culture. The "too powerful" accusation itself raises the specter of that genocide in the minds and guts of Jewish people. It is the reminder that "it can happen anywhere," even in what seems at one moment to be a very favorable climate for living a decent life. Indeed, that is one of the reasons that so many American Jews do support Israel and its policies so ardently and often uncritically.

## CONCLUSION

We in the United States are largely ignorant of the body of international law that accords groups rights to vulnerable people. Indeed, we have a very strong commitment to individualism and individual rights, but tend to reject any notion of group or collective rights. This is strange given the fact that our very claim to exist as a nation was based upon such a collective claim, the right to self-determination by an oppressed people. We need to retain our commitment to the widest possible right of freedom of expression for individuals and private associations, but we must also take care that public institutions do not violate the collective rights of vulnerable minorities, especially those that have been subjected to genocide, by participating in or facilitating their negative stereotyping.

## Ntakarutimana to Speak on Healing from Civil War

Florence Ntakarutimana will give a talk entitled, "Healing from Civil War: Bringing the enemy sides together in Burundi" on Wednesday, June 25 at 7 PM at the Urbana-Champaign Friends Meetinghouse, 1904 E. Main, Urbana. Refreshments will be served following the presentation.

How can a country heal after twelve years of civil war, which killed 3% of the population? How can another greater round of violence be avoided? Florence Ntakarutimana will talk about grassroots efforts to move towards a peaceful future in which desires for revenge are turned into reconciliation.

Donations will be accepted for Florence's work in Burundi. The events are co-sponsored by African Great Lakes Initiative, Urbana-Champaign Friends Meeting, and Channing-Murray Foundation

For more information, contact Charlotte Green [chgreen48@yahoo.com](mailto:chgreen48@yahoo.com) or Sandy Bales [sbales@uiuc.edu](mailto:sbales@uiuc.edu)

## Camp Uhuru 2008 June 23-25

This summer from June 23 to July 25, be on the lookout for Camp Uhuru, a community Summer Youth Initiative for children from ages 6-13, organized through the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center. This unique camp aims to work with children in a holistic way to nurture their academic learning abilities, creative capacities, and physical health through the richness and diversity of African knowledge and culture. The word Uhuru means liberation in Swahili, and one of the other core tenets of this camp is that true freedom can only be attained through collective consciousness formed by education and community participation.

Camp Uhuru will take place on the University of Illinois campus from 12-5pm, M-F. If you would like more information on Camp Uhuru 2008, or can participate us by volunteering a couple of hours each week tutoring and helping with activities, please contact Camp Uhuru at: [uhurukulturshok@gmail.com](mailto:uhurukulturshok@gmail.com) or call 217.819.0332





# Aramark™ Makes Horrible Lunches, and Kids Do Something About It

By *dezyp*



*Dezyp was a fifth-grader at Leal Elementary School in Urbana and will be entering Urbana Middle School in the fall. He plays cello, and would like to be an aerospace engineer when he grows up.*

I go to Leal Elementary School in Urbana, and our school lunches suck. Most of the kids in my class think the school lunches are unhealthy, and should not be served at our school, or any other elementary school. For me, our school lunches made me feel sick. A couple hours after I ate them my stomach felt like it was turned upside down.

At first we just made jokes about suing Aramark™. Then I decided that we had to do something to protest our school lunches. I mostly didn't do much except for talking to kids about starting up a protest. So we formed Healthy School Lunch (HSL). Three of my friends, K., L., and A., made signs and we held them during lunchtime as a part of our picket. We did this ever day for about a month. Some of the signs said

things like, "Stay healthy, don't eat school lunch," and "H.S.L wants to make school lunch more healthy—Join H.S.L."

After our protests about three or four new kids joined, but a lot of kids thought it was stupid. I think they were afraid of getting in trouble, but we weren't and we kept protesting. After about 20 or so of these protests the lunch counselors took our signs away, but we made new ones and continued to protest for a little longer. Also the principal started to make new rules to stop us like: 'no standing up during lunchtime,' 'restricting a lot of talking during lunch time,' and 'what we could bring with us at lunch.'

Then we decided to write a letter to the school board, and start a petition. A couple of kids brought the petition to each fifth grade class. Over fifty kids signed the petition, and a girl, M., and her parents took them to a school board meeting one night. I think this really made a difference because in March some school board members and two Aramark™ guys came to our school to meet with our group. They came at lunch hour, and sat with us to talk. During the meeting the school board members did eat the school lunch food, but the Ara-

mark™ members didn't, and they wouldn't tell us why when we asked.

During the meeting we got to ask them questions like: "Is the war affecting the quality of our lunches?" and "Why did they stop having vegetarian meals?" They said that the war had nothing to do with our lunch, and that the salad bar replaced vegetarian meals. Then that aroused the question: "Why are all the vegetables at the salad bar so soggy?" They said that it was not their fault, but the fault of the company they got the actual food from. The Aramark™ guys

said that they make lunch at the middle school and high school every day. So I asked them if we get it the next day, and the school board members, not Aramark™, said "yes." They said that they would TRY to make school lunch better

and promised that they would try really hard. It really seemed like they didn't take us seriously though.

What I learned from this experience is that when you are not at someone else's level of authority, maturity, or age, you need a lot of people to make a difference. I also think other kids should know that you can stand up for what you think, no matter what the consequences are. Also, kids should know that one kid CAN make a difference, but many people make a BIGGER difference. Last, but not least, I hope that other kids keep the HSL

going next year, and that other schools start a HSL.

By the way, I later found out that Aramark™ also makes the food for the jail. I hope that their lunch isn't as bad as ours.



Dezy in front of his school

# A Bourgeoning Community Garden In North Champaign

By *Niloofar Shambayati*



*Niloofar Shambayati is a long-time resident of Champaign and teaches Humanities at Parkland College.*

*...garden programs serve to further a vision of what should be in times when society is unclear about where the future is heading.*

—Laura J. Lawson, *City Bountiful, A Century of Community Gardening in America* (2005)

As chronicled in *City Bountiful*, at least since 1890's, socially and politically constructed community gardening has been employed to ameliorate the effects of wars, economic depressions, and social unrest. As stop-gap measures, most of these projects disappear when the immediate crisis seems to be over. Today's skyrocketing cost of energy and food makes the idea of growing a portion of one's food appealing again, even in the Midwest with its short planting and harvesting seasons. Another related impulse for urban gardening seems to be a sense of helplessness that most of us feel when it comes to big corporations and governments deciding what we can and should consume for the profit of a few. Similar to 1970's and 1980's waves of turning vacant lots into urban gardens, community gardeners of today hope that their efforts would create permanent open spaces to bring neighborhoods together and give them a sense of empowerment and well-being. Such pragmatic and idealistic goals coalesce in a 2-acre plot of land in north Champaign—Randolph Street Community Garden.

On any fair day, at the corner of Randolph Street and Beardsley Avenue, there's a good chance that you will see a group of youngsters, several senior citizens, and a couple of families working on small patches of vegetable and flower gardens. There's also a good chance that a smiling Dawn Blackman would welcome you to take a look

around and help her with spreading mulch on a newly-raised garden bed. A busy Charles Doty would tell you about hundreds of heirloom seeds which he has been nursing carefully in his Washington Square apartment. This peaceful space provides those who live or work in the neighborhood with the opportunity to share the joys and toils of gardening together.

The origin of Randolph Street Community Garden goes back to spring of 2004 when Master Gardeners of the University of Illinois Extension Service initiated a community gardening project north of the newly built Stratton School. The Master Gardeners invited the neighborhood residents to partake of this initiative and allocated patches of garden beds to interested individuals. Dawn Blackman of the Motherlands Culture Club seized upon this opportunity to connect the children in her program directly to agriculture. The children experi-

ences using the available fresh and organic ingredients. Here, you can see the food and environmental justice movement in action—no textbook or lecturing required.

In 2006, the original gardeners left their plots unattended due to draught, and the Master Gardeners' program too had to end its initiative. Blackman, however, continued her gardening and, in time, the Champaign School District offered to provide the garden with running water. Charles Doty, an avid gardener without a garden, drew some of the residents of Washington Square apartments to the garden. As acknowledged by all, the interaction between the older gardeners and the youngsters has been most rewarding to both groups.

This spring, several volunteers from the Association of Students of Landscape Architecture spent several hours to prepare the garden for planting. Small monetary and material donations by community members and the persistent "treasure" hunting by organizers yield small but rewarding improvements to the garden—one day a wheelbarrow, the next day a birdbath. Blackman would like to have a mini-market once a week to sell the extra produce and flower bouquets to defray some of the cost of running the garden. Several beds have been raised, already. The organizers plan to build a storage shed and a ramp for gardeners in wheelchairs, install more benches and picnic tables in the shady areas, and turn the garden into a pleasing open space for everyone to enjoy.

As only less than one-half acre of the two-acre land is currently being utilized, the garden organizers invite individuals and families to join in. Indeed, a critical mass of committed gardeners needs to be reached before this

*Continued on page 7*



Community member at work in the garden

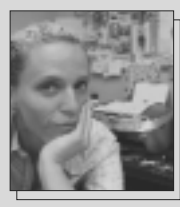
ence the feasibility of growing food in an urban setting, learn how to grow and harvest a variety of nutritious and culturally diverse edibles, and try to improvise various





## Buying Local and You

By Lisa Bralts



*Lisa Bralts is an Economic Development Specialist and is the Director of Market at the Square. She lives in Urbana with her family.*

Fuel prices are high, food prices are high, and the costs of both continue to rise while we look on, unable or unwilling to reconcile a lifetime of relatively cheap food and fuel with the current prices we're seeing for both. We might buy less. We might go without some things we usually buy. A few of us may find ourselves relying on external

sources—friends, family, food pantries—to make those food ends meet. Some of us might start new vegetable gardens, or expand existing ones—a meaningful activity on many levels—but it's often framed as a temporary measure, a stopgap, something to do until things get back to 'normal.' But this, the way things are, it's the new normal.

The mainstream media, attempting to puzzle it all out by looking for easy solutions, has hopped onto the latest in food "trends"—locally-sourced food. However, instead of focusing on an array of reasons for buying local—the long-term environmental sustainability of such food, its likely eventual necessity due to resource depletion, the benefits to re-establishing the connection between people and their food that seems to have been lost since the end of World War II, and its positive impact on local economies—the emphasis appears to be purely on cost to consumers. "Why isn't buying local cheaper? Inquiring minds want to know."

Last season, one local farmer spent over \$24,000 in diesel fuel hauling his produce to Urbana for its farmers' market. That's just fuel. Local farmers are paying significantly more for seed, animal feed if they keep livestock, and other inputs to be able to bring produce to local farmers' markets. Most people would agree that our farmers should pay their labor (and themselves) a living wage for farming these higher-quality, fresher, and more varied foods, yet do not understand why the carrots or the tomatoes "cost so much." When you take government subsidies out of the picture and add an emphasis on quality and freshness and ready access to everyone—the cost, quite simply, goes up. Obviously, while the true cost of food to consumers is one issue that needs addressing (though perhaps not in the way the mainstream media would like to address it), all these ideas around sourcing food locally require considerable breaking down to provide real context.

The Illinois Local and Organic Food and Farm Task Force, appointed by Governor Blagojevich in late 2007 after the passage of the Illinois Food, Farm and Jobs Act, has been charged with doing just that. On May 28, the Task Force convened a listening session in downtown Urbana, one of several throughout the state, designed to find out what local and regional eaters think about their food system – its successes, its failures, its realities, and its possibilities. The Task Force will present their statewide findings to the General Assembly this fall.

After remarks by Urbana Mayor Laurel Prussing and a series of brief presentations by Task Force Chair (and U of I professor/goat farmer) Dr. Wesley Jarrell and Task Force members Debbie Hillman of the Evanston Food Policy Council and Jim Braun of the Illinois Farmer-Consumer Coalition, the proceedings were turned over to the audience of about 50, which included area farmers, young people, advocates for improving school/institutional food, advocates for better emergency food, advocates for better food access and education about food issues, and other concerned eaters. The conversation lasted for over two hours.

Issues residents would like to see further addressed by the Task Force include:

- More involvement in creating a better farm bill;
- More involvement by municipalities and counties, rather than just the state, in the direction of food policy;
- Developing labeling guidelines for food grown in Illinois and the methods used to do so;
- More involvement in farm-to-institution initiatives (bringing better food to schools, prisons, hospitals, and other institutions);
- Incentives for young people to farm (finding young people willing to farm is becoming increasingly difficult – farmer Diane Moore said, "The hours are killing our boys. They can't wait to run away");
- Incentives for farmers to switch production from commodities to "real" food (instead of feed corn and soybeans, e.g., what about sweet corn and shell beans, potatoes, orchards?);
- The proposed National Animal Identification System and how, if passed, it will injure smaller livestock producers;
- Development of localized food processing, storage, and distribution networks to ensure a more local food supply in the off-season;
- Development of feasible agritourism initiatives;
- The role resource depletion will play in food production and distribution.

Despite its "farmy" reputation, Illinois imports over 90% of its food from other places. Most of Illinois' farmland is used in the production of animal feed, food for processing, and, increasingly, biofuels, which means that the vast majority of acreage used for farming in Illinois is not used to grow food that feeds people directly, but is used by agribusiness to grow commodities for sale on the world market.

Illinois would be unable to feed itself if it had to. In fact, the current nationwide food production/distribution model ensures that the United States is well on the path to a similar fate. "We're going to wake up one morning and be a food-insecure nation," said Triple S Farm owner Stan Schutte.

Support your local growers, if you can.

Get involved:

The Task Force meetings are open to any and all who wish to attend. Please go to their

website at [http://www.agr.state.il.us/marketing/Mkt\\_ILOFFTaskForce.html](http://www.agr.state.il.us/marketing/Mkt_ILOFFTaskForce.html).

Other links of interest:

National Animal Identification System in Illinois: <http://nonais.org/?p=891>

Urbana's Market at the Square: <http://www.city.urbana.il.us/market>

Market at the Square's blog: <http://www.market-at-the-square.blogspot.com>

The Greenhorns: <http://www.thegreenhorns.wordpress.com>

Community Food Security Coalition: <http://www.foodsecurity.org>



Fresh Vegetables



Folk music



Community organizations doing outreach





# Local Ownership, Democracy, Community Building, and Cooperation

By Jacqueline Hannah

Common Ground Food Co-op has grown and thrived on these, the seven principles of the international cooperative movement, for 33 years. Now, about to enter into its 34th year, Common Ground is relocating for the first time in its history.

Common Ground was founded in the basement of the Illinois Disciples Foundation building at the corner of Wright and Springfield in Champaign. From the modest beginnings of a few tables scattered about a room with a few organic foods on offer, the co-op is about to more than double its current space in a storefront, newly remodeled shop at Lincoln Square Mall.

The store will face Vine Street and will open directly onto a large parking lot area. Common Ground's new home is on schedule to open August 15th. Construction started on the new store as of April and is being headed up by Restorations & Remedies, a local contracting company owned by co-op member and former co-op board member Tim Gibbs.

The new co-op will be over twice the size of its current shop. Features will include over 48 feet of organic produce cases and shelves, making the co-op's produce department the largest exclusively organic and local produce department in Champaign County. A new deli department is being added after receiving huge demand from current co-op owners and community members. The deli will feature local ingredients whenever possible and will have a cold salad bar, hot foods case, three fresh soups every day, a full grab and go case, as well as fair trade organic coffees. Lincoln Square has generously donated the use of indoor seating space exclusively for the use of co-op deli diners as well as an outdoor seating area just outside the co-op's front door, providing a space not only for dining but to build community.



Shelves of packaged organic foods



Fresh organic fruit

The groundswell of public support has been amazing throughout the project. Common Ground's member-owners personally pledged over \$250,000 in direct loans to the co-op to make the new store a reality, more than any other co-op Common Ground's size has ever raised. New members have been pouring in, and investments in and support for the project has come from numerous public and political figures in Champaign-Urbana.

The expanded store will not only allow Common Ground to bring in more local foods and support more local farmers. Historically a member-only organization, Common Ground will be opening its doors to members and non-members alike in August.

In addition to expanding the availability of local and organic foods, Common Ground will be giving more and more attention to their mission of education at their new location. The co-op has started an organic demonstration garden in Urbana this summer, offered gardening workshops, and participated in panels and discussions on local food. Classes on everything from cooking, to cold frame gardening, to how to build your own rain barrel are in the works for late 2008.

**A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS!**

The Public i would like to thank all of the people who attended our fund-raiser last month. We very much appreciate your support!

**READER RESPONSES**

The Public i encourages reader responses to the articles, either with letters or with articles that present a different point of view. email: [print@ucimc.org](mailto:print@ucimc.org)

## Community Garden

Continued from page 5

garden becomes an integral and sustainable part of North Champaign. In my opinion, the most beneficial way to reach this goal is to develop a partnership between the garden and the area schools. Many individuals are skeptical and point to the failing policy of *No Child Left Behind* which has been hanging over our educational system like a Damocles sword and leaves no money, energy, or time to be spent on gardening and cooking with the harvested produce.

My visits to the garden, however, show me something else. I see plenty of opportunities for the students at Stratton and the youth at alternative programs at Columbia Center and I become optimistic. We can demand from our Board of Education and school administrators that they incorporate innovative gardening projects into the curricula of these two educational centers, and that they put aside the fear of low cumulative test scores. Existing models show that such projects make learning more enjoyable and effective, can bring together ethnically and culturally diverse

students, and help connect schools and families. Keep pressing on and, in the meanwhile, get involved with the work of Randolph Street Community Garden by acquiring a patch of garden, volunteering your time and talents, and donating money and needed material.

Contact Information:

Dawn Blackman  
C/O Champaign Church of the Brethren  
1210 N. Neil Street  
Champaign, IL 61820  
217-398-2787  
[Motherlands@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Motherlands@sbcglobal.net)

Charles Doty  
217-531-7568  
[fiftyplusandkids@yahoo.com](mailto:fiftyplusandkids@yahoo.com)



Young gardeners at work





# Tamms CMAX Super-Maximum Security Prison

By Neil Parthun



Neil Parthun is a schoolteacher in the Rantoul School District.

Imagine being in solitary isolation twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Imagine no telephone calls. Imagine limited visits with loved ones. Imagine the few visits that are allowed to take place happening with no physical contact. Imagine the near constant loud moans of the mentally ill and having to scream as a means of communication. Imagine being in this horrific place and not even knowing how long you will stay or what you can do to end your confinement. This place is not myth. For 260 people, this is their daily reality. This is what life is like inside the Tamms CMAX super-maximum security prison in southern Illinois.

Located in rural Tamms, Illinois, the Tamms CMAX was created in 1998 by the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC). According to George DeTella of IDOC, "The Tamms Correctional Center and its mission and its original concept was to be a relatively short term incarceration for inmates placed there... In addition, the object of Tamms is to place an inmate at that location and then always transition him back to general population at either Menard or Statesville Correctional Centers." However, since its controversial inception, the Tamms CMAX prison has faced serious problems that should cause people to question its existence.

The Illinois Department of Corrections designed Tamms to keep men in short-term incarceration. However, ten years later, 88 of the original prisoners are still languishing at Tamms CMAX. The 200+ inmates at Tamms have endured the conditions for years beyond the scope of IDOC's original founding concepts. The Illinois Department of Corrections has violated their statements about how Tamms was going to be used.

The living conditions at Tamms make the horrors of long-term incarceration more brutal. Each day, a prisoner's routine is the same. Prisoners are confined to their 8-by-12 foot cell 23 to 24 hours per day. All meals are served to the inmates through slots in cell doors. All prisoner movement is done one-on-one to prevent any social contact. Almost all contact that the prisoners have with staff is done via speakers or through slots in cell doors. There are no phone calls. All visits take place through speakers with

a barrier between inmate and visitor. There are no religious or educational programs/activities. Reading materials, television, and radio are severely restricted. Clearly, these inmates are severely socially isolated. They have almost no human contact, even with other inmates or prison staff.

The goal of prisons is to rehabilitate prisoners so they can become productive citizens upon their release. Super-maximum security prisons like Tamms CMAX not only fail in this goal; they tremendously undercut efforts to rehabilitate the inmates. As Pizzarro and Stenius argued in *Supermax Prisons: Their Rise, Current Practices and Effect on Inmates*: "An additional question arises as to whether it is worthwhile to place someone in a supermax facility for the sake of reducing violence and disturbances within prisons (which research suggests is not accomplished), only to release that individual into society as less capable of normal social functioning than when he or she was sent into prison."

Super-maximum security prisons like Tamms CMAX are not about rehabilitation that will assist these community members to become effective, law-abiding citizens in the future. The severe sensory deprivation and social isolation are a combination that is psychological torture. So many inmates have developed mental illnesses as a result of Tamms' practices that Tamms was forced to open an entire mental health wing. These methods of psychological torture and retribution fly in the face of peoples' beliefs about prison and also cause severe harm to those unfortunate members of our community to endure such inhumane conditions.

Tamms CMAX prisoners have supposedly earned their way into these tortuous conditions by their behavior and inability to live in a general prison population. But, over half of the 260 men housed at Tamms are there for undefined 'administrative segregation' rather than any noted behavioral problem. Likewise, in their years at Tamms, the vast majority of prisoners have never received a disciplinary report or had rules infractions. Most of the inmates at Tamms endure these terrifying conditions with the knowledge that they have no idea how long their sentences will last, even if they are well behaved. Tamms CMAX and the Illinois Department of Corrections have only released fourteen men to a general prison population in the ten years that Tamms has been open.

If these egregious abuses of human rights were not enough, Tamms CMAX is also a waste of money. According to the Illinois Department of Corrections, housing a prisoner at Tamms costs two or three times as much as any

other adult prison in Illinois. Menard's annual cost per prisoner is \$19,190. Pontiac is \$32,121. Statesville is \$32,121. Tamms CMAX's annual cost is an astronomical \$58,994. When one pairs the staggeringly high economic cost necessary to run Tamms to the deplorable human rights conditions, it becomes quite clear that Tamms must be closed.

However, there have been recent developments that seek to change this status quo. The Illinois General Assembly has recently introduced *House Bill (HB) 6651*, sponsored by Rep. Julie Hamos. This bill would set forth strict behavioral criteria to guide what constitutes eligibility for transfer to Tamms to ensure that only violent or severely disruptive inmates are imprisoned there. The bill also bans the mentally ill from ever being sent to Tamms to endure the psychological torture. HB 6651 also institutes a system of oversight hearings for inmates—from their transfer to the super-maximum security facility to determinations about their eligibility once incarcerated. Ramos's bill also demands the immediate transfer out of Tamms for any inmate who develops a mental illness. The measures in HB 6651 are an excellent beginning to addressing the numerous problems at Tamms.

We must oppose this brutality. While the billboard out in front of Tamms CMAX states that it is "a good place to live," we must show the world we disagree. If you would like to get involved in the campaign to reform or close Tamms CMAX, check out [www.yearten.org](http://www.yearten.org) for more information.

## Red State Rebels Tour: Tales of Grassroots Resistance in the Heartland

Free Event!

A Discussion with Jeffrey St. Clair and Joshua Frank.

There's A Rebellion is Breaking Out!

Sunday, June 22 at 2:00PM

Illini Union Bookstore, 217-333-2050

809 South Wright Street, Champaign, IL 61820

For more information:

[www.akpress.org/2008/items/redstaterebelsakpress](http://www.akpress.org/2008/items/redstaterebelsakpress)

# Graduate Employees Unite!

Andrew O'Baoill



Andrew O'Baoill is a past President of the GEO, and a graduate student in the Institute of Communications Research. The GEO website, with resources for graduate employees and students at the University of Illinois, is at <http://uigeo.org>.

Over the Memorial Day holiday weekend, the Graduate Employees' Organization (GEO, IFT/AFT 6300) hosted 80 graduate employee union activists and leaders for the AGEL (Alliance of Graduate Employee Locals) conference, a twice-yearly gathering to reflect on lessons learnt and challenges ahead. The conference followed a year in which the GEO had successfully increased both member numbers and the breadth of union activity, with active groups working on areas ranging from healthcare, to reform of the SPEAK test

(spoken language proficiency test for TAs), to LGBT concerns, and more. This high level of engagement was reflected in the number of GEO members turning out to attend sessions, with several dozen members taking part throughout the weekend.

One of the highlights was a discussion with the grad union at the University of Michigan about their recent successful contract victory, in which they talked us through the timeline of their campaign, from member engagement and platform development to the denouement of a walk-out that was cut short when the university administration caved to the union's strike platform. This and other sessions fed into many productive conversations among GEO members about the work of focusing a committed membership on next year's contract struggle, where the battle will continue for living wages, decent healthcare, and workplaces built on respect.

Such impromptu discussions are, of course, the hallmark of a successful event,

where the formal sessions are not self-contained, but bleed into the socializing that surrounds any such event. Another important indicator is the existence of a reflective dialog concerning the situation and structure of the broader movement. This conference saw a continuation of discussions over the relationship between contingent academic labor and the institution of academic tenure, a complex issue that demands nuanced and thoughtful examination.

Other forms of critique were prompted and encouraged by a keynote address by Prof. Antonia Darder on Friday evening, in which she encouraged grad unions to view themselves as part of broader struggles for social justice and to critically assess what that should mean for the structures and actions of the union movement.

The graduate employee union movement is one of the most vibrant within the educational sector, representing a workforce that is uniquely vulnerable, consistently exploited, and often conflicted over its sta-

tus as 'workers.' Here at the University of Illinois graduate employees' wages are more than \$2,000 below living wage rates for a single person. A dual status as both employee and student can make workers vulnerable to pressure from faculty, unsure of the boundaries between academic requirements and paid labor, and fearful of the repercussions of challenging overwork or other unfair practices. International students, in particular, can be concerned about visa issues, while graduate students with family obligations do not fit the assumptions that often shape university policies.

The work of organizing is often characterized as being about conversations. This conference, and the conversations it generates, will play an important role in shaping a richer and more effective union movement, as graduate employees work together for a voice in the conditions that shape their lives, moving us closer to the goals of respect, fair rewards, and quality workplaces.





# In Memory of U. Utah Phillips (1935–2008)

By Antonia Darder



Antonia Darder is a professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She is longtime Puerto Rican activist-scholar involved in issues related to education, language, immigrant, workers, and women's rights.

*I discovered a dignified, ancient, elegant trade, one where I could own what I do and never have to have a boss again.*

--U. Utah Phillips

Bruce Duncan Phillips, the man who went by U. Utah Phillips and whom others dubbed "the Golden Voice of the Great Southwest," died at age 73. The folk singer, songwriter, storyteller, and social activist blended music, politics and history, inspiring the world with labor movement songs for almost 40 years. He often jokingly said, "It's nice to know there are some things in early 21st-century post-industrial culture that don't change very fast. I am one of those."

Phillips was the son of labor organizers and as an anarchist, he joined the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

He worked as an archivist for the State of Utah, but after a run for the United States Senate in 1968 on the Peace and Freedom ticket, he lost his state job. So, he decided to try to make a living as a folksinger. He wrote songs influenced by Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger. Coffeehouses, clubs, and festivals would sustain him for nearly 40 years, as he learned "how to make a living, not a killing."

He recorded his first albums for the Philo label and later recorded for Red House. Although he was always a pretty forthright folk singer, in the album *The Past Didn't Go Anywhere* (Righteous Babe), Ani DiFranco contemporized his songs and stories with electronic tracks more akin to hip-hop. *Fellow Workers*, with DiFranco, was nominated for a Grammy Award for best contemporary folk album of 1999.

In the late 1980s, Phillips settled in Nevada City. He produced a series, *Loafer's Glory*, on public radio, which was syndicated nationally and compiled the series on his own label, No Guff. Phillips founded Hospitality House, a non-profit group that serves the homeless in collaboration with churches and the Peace and Justice Center in Nevada City.

Health problems forced him to retire from touring in 2007. He died on May 23 of congestive heart failure. Anne



U. Utah Phillips

Feeney said of Utah Phillips, "It somehow seems appropriate that Utah's gigantic heart was his weakness. He had a tremendous love for us all." The life and songs of U. Utah Phillips will remain ever present wherever workers struggle for justice and a living wage.

# Paul Sierra's Afternoon Landscape at Krannert Art Museum

Paul Sierra was born in Havana, Cuba in 1944. His work reflects on the primary elements in nature and mythology that represent transformation and passage through fire, water, and lush vegetation. His bold brush strokes layer the canvas until they are thick and buttery with intense color. Attending the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the American Academy of Art, his work takes the helm of a unique expressionistic quality that has made him one of the most successful Cuban-American artists.

Sierra's work is included in the Landscapes of Experience and Imagination: Explorations by Midwest Latina/o Artists exhibition, which is showing until July 27 at the Krannert Art Museum. These works reflect the responses of Latina/Latino artists to the natural and built environment. The six, largely Chicago-based artists have explored the theme of landscapes through mixed and new narrative media installations, as well as through more traditional means of drawing, painting, and sculpture. Their works address the memories or imaginings of a tropical forest, the suburbs, and the density of urban-scapes, as well as the artists' own self-identities or understandings of the Latin presence in the United States.



Afternoon Landscape

# The Second Coming of Marx: A Play on History

Due to some Brigadoon-like miracle, Karl Marx has been granted permission to return to earth for a day to explain once more to disciples and detractors alike



what he really meant. But a mix-up in the celestial bureaucracy has resulted in him appearing in the Soho area of New York rather than London, where he lived and died.

This is the premise of Howard Zinn's one-man play, *Marx in Soho: A Play on History*, to show in Urbana on July 18 and 19. Zinn, a retired history professor at Boston University, is perhaps best known as the author of *A People's History of the United States*.

Performances will be at 7:30 p.m., Friday at the Independent Media Center in downtown Urbana and Saturday at the Channing-Murray Foundation, near the University of Illinois campus. Suggested donation is \$5 per person.

For more information go to: <http://www.levyarts.com/>

# Something So Horrible: Springfield Race Riot of 1908 Exhibit



Upcoming at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in June is *Something So Horrible: Springfield Race Riot of 1908*. Gathering photographs, news accounts, oral histories,

artifacts and other materials, the library will present an exhibition exploring Springfield's most violent racial confrontation. In the one hundred years since the riot occurred, the historical record has been clouded, reshaped, denied, or forgotten. The purpose of the exhibition is to tell the story of the riot clearly so that the public will know what happened and begin to understand why it happened.

Within hours of a reported rape of a White woman by a Black man, a mob of thousands took control of Springfield. In the violence that held sway in the city for two days, two Black men were lynched, four White men were killed, scores of people were injured, and extensive property was damaged before 4000 state militiamen intervened.

*Something So Horrible: Springfield Race Riot of 1908* will illustrate how racism and political corruption undermined law and order and set the stage for mob rule. The exhibit will also show how an event of one hundred years ago lives in both the historical record of the past and the racial divisions that continue to confound us.



Old photos of the aftermath of the Race Riots of 1908

# SOCIALISM 2008 June 19–22,

Crowne Plaza Chicago O'Hare  
 "A weekend of revolutionary politics, debate and entertainment."  
 For more information see: <http://www.socialismconference.org>





## Chicago May Day March

By Maria Isabel Silva

May 1st marks International Workers' Day, an official government holiday in most countries around the world, with mass demonstrations, rallies and marches held to express labor solidarity and celebrate workers' rights. Here in the U.S., May Day is not a government-sanctioned holiday, even though its commemoration began in this country.

Nevertheless, 50,000 marchers and activists filled the streets of Chicago to commemorate May Day this year. The march represented a powerful, bringing together people working on a variety of issues, including workers' rights, human rights, opposition to the Iraq war, and most resoundingly immigrants rights.

Immigrant rights activists held both U.S. and Mexican flags, along with banners and signs demanding reform of the immigration law, to be passed this election year. The marchers called for equal rights for the 12 million undocumented immigrants who pay taxes and contribute to the U.S. economy yearly. Speakers at the protest demanded a stop to the violence of ICE raids and deportations being carried out across the county.

The march, which started at Union Park, ended in downtown Chicago, where a platform was placed for performers, activists and politicians to address participants. Among those present were Tom Morrello from Rage Against the Machine, singing to the thousands congregated there. Activists and workers representatives from the Teamsters Local 743 addressed the rights of the workers to the 8-hour-day, to medical insurance and the right to form and be part of a union without retaliation from the companies.

Latino politicians supported the demands for legalization and better working conditions for immigrants and expressed the importance of the Latino vote in upcoming elections. Chicago's Mayor Richard M. Daley told the crowd "immigrants are part of the fabric of the American society...The City of Chicago was built by immigrants, and will continue to be built by immigrants." Daley affirmed that Chicago has declared itself a welcome city for immigrants.

The marchers and activists were spirited in their demands. The incredible success of the march this year was due to the participation of a wide range of organizations and people who joined together. Of particular note was the presence of young people, white activists, representatives of churches from different denominations, African American groups and activists, activist for sexual rights, union workers, and political officials, who recognize the need for unity in the struggle for a better world.

This cross-cultural and cross-issue approach is effectively galvanizing a movement, which extends beyond unity for Latino immigrants or a fight of one racialized group, but rather a larger struggle, which supports legalization for undocumented immigrants, workers rights, and social justice for all people in this country.



Above: Poster by Favianna Rodriguez (Oakland, California)

Left: May Day Marchers take to the streets of Chicago

Next page: Martina Miranda Lugo, Judith Estrada, Abel Correa, and Aide Acosta from the Champaign Urbana community join the thousands of pro-immigrant, pro-worker activists in Chicago for the march.

## Come to a Listening Party

Tired of only listening to what the herd thinks is best? Every 3rd Wednesday of the month from 7PM to 10PM your local Independent Media Center located at 202 S. Broadway Ave., Urbana, IL 61801 (the old downtown Post Office) will help you break from the herd and invites you to bring a specially burned CD or custom iPod mix (carefully chosen beforehand) and either something outstanding to drink or something rather delicious to eat. We will provide the outstanding audiophile-grade speakers that, when played at high volume, will shake the walls and rattle the windows and peel back your skin without getting all distorted and annoying, loud enough that the sound they produce will easily prevent all discussion until the given song has ended and everyone can breathe again and grab another drink and say, Wow, what the hell was that? (This someone, obviously, also has very understanding neighbors.)

It is called a listening party. It is a loosely directed but

passionately devised gathering held purely for the love and discovery of music. New music. Old music. Loud music. It is about quality. It is about range. It is, perhaps more than anything else, about surprise. In other words, you do not bring some common hit song to the listening party, some standard tune that everyone's heard a million times by an artist that makes most people wince. In other words, you bring something interesting, unexpected. It can be a mainstream band, but the song should be sonically fascinating, well recorded, and somehow unique.

The event moves in rounds. Everyone gets to play a single track in each round. The fun part: You do not announce your song. You do not let it be known whose tune is coming up next. You let the music speak for itself. You let the surprise happen. You get to test your musical knowledge, also how well you know the other participants ("Dude, I knew that Nina Simone techno remix was yours"). This is part of the

adventure. After each full round, a short break for more pizza, drink refills, smoking, chat. Rounds progress. Themes emerge. Moods shift and ebb and flow. Amazing synchronicities and juxtapositions occur. You discover songs, new bands, maybe entire genres you never knew existed. Your tastes expand, your musical horizons broaden. This is much of the point. It's chaos theory with a soundtrack.

The event is free and open to all ages. We ask that you give a donation when we pass the hat/jar/cup/whatever around each night. Bring an open mind, bring music, and if you are bringing children know they may get some exposure. Drinks and food may or may not be present depending on if we (that includes you) bring any. Be prepared to socialize and network with people with a passion for music, art, culture, and our local community.

### Music at IMC

**June 19th**—Cabinet of Natural Curiosities/Good Night and Good Morning/Morgan Orion/Twin Cats. A quiet folk/electro show.

**June 22nd**—Jim Atkinson, Peter Bonos, and Ben Segal/Plan B. Jim, Peter and Ben present a multi-genre exploration of temporality through literature, physics, and music.

**June 29th**—Static Thought/Down We Go/Opium Den Massacre/Alleyway Sex. Hardcore/punk show.

All of the shows start at 8:00 P.M. and cost \$5. If you have any more questions feel free to email: [shows@ucimc.org](mailto:shows@ucimc.org)



# Chicago May Day Rally

Photos by Judith Estrada and Maria Silva

Over 50,000 Americans from diverse organizations across Chicago came together to demonstrate for social and economic justice including equal and just treatment for all workers and immigrants.

